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### PAKISTAN'S OBJECTIVES

Pakistan's immediate concern is to achieve agreement with the US on a firm timetable for the delivery of weapons under the general agreements reached last month in Islamabad.

Pakistan especially wants to nail down agreement on the early sale of F-16s. US willingness to provide Pakistan with sophisticated aircraft is central to Islamabad's acceptance of the recent military sales and economic aid agreement. The inclusion of F-16s in a sizeable package:

- demonstrated a firm US commitment to Pakistan's security unencumbered by an "India veto"
- provides Pakistan with a significantly upgraded defense capability in the face of Soviet and Indian threats
- gives Islamabad a deal it can sell to its own people.

Any indication now that the US is unwilling or unable to fulfill its public pledge on the early provision of F-16s -- particularly since the Indians have made the aircraft the focus of their protests about the deal -- would:

- rekindle strong Pakistani doubts about the reliability of US commitments
- convince many Pakistanis that the US is still sensitive to New Delhi's protests
- strengthen the lobby inside Pakistan that argues against too close a relationship with the US
- get the new relationship off to a shaky start and possibly foreclose closer security ties in the future.

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Pakistan's underlying concern has always been the reliability of the US commitment. Islamabad agrees that the Soviets are the primary strategic threat to Southwest Asia, but argues that India could act in concert with Moscow to disarm Pakistan and turn it into a weak buffer state between Soviet and Indian spheres of influence. Islamabad wants the US to recognize the potential for Indo-Soviet collusion and insists that the US-Pakistan relationship not be in any way conditioned on US concern for Indian sensitivities.

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